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Front Page Edit Page Other Page

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A Sickening Web

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Is a king-sized Alger Hiss case shaping up? Two startling revelations made recently would make it seem so—or, at least, serious attention must be given to far-reaching accusations.

It took a lot of doing, but Hiss, the former darling of the State Department, was sentenced to five years on Jan. 21, 1950, for perjury in denying he passed secret documents to Whittaker Chambers for transmission to a spy ring.

Hiss had been one of the architects of the United Nations, was a driving force behind summit meetings of World War II, and appeared to be everything that a trusted and dedicated diplomat should be. When accusations were made by Chambers, who revealed his own role to tell all, there was a great outcry from the White House, Supreme Court, halls of Congress and highest government agencies. The nation's top leaders defended Hiss. Chambers, a sloppily dressed and unimpressive appearing witness, was maligned by a major segment of the press. But the truth finally emerged—there are traitors in high places.

Afterwards, Chambers revealed the nightmare he had endured in trying to get someone to listen to him. His charges frequently were pigeonholed before they reached the top level.

History may be repeating itself in the case of Michael Goieniewski, a former ranking operative in the Soviet Union's KGB who defected to the West and came to this country in 1961. He, too, has proceeded to tell all:

The KGB infiltrating all major American embassies and "every U.S. Agency except the FBI."

Some \$1.2-million in Central Intelligence Agency funds being diverted to the Communists.

Three American scientists, with access to defense secrets, working for the KGB.

Then there is this similarity to the Chambers-Hiss case: Goieniewski says he has been feeding facts to the CIA since 1960 but little, if anything, has been done. Like Chambers, he says he has been thwarted in his efforts to get vital information to responsible high officials.

Why?

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The answer may have been provided late last week when the accusation was made there were 847 "grave security risks" in the State Department in 1957 and nearly all of them are still there.

This charge was not made by some defector or ex-Communist. It was made by the late Scott McLeod, former head of the State Department's bureau of security and consular affairs. Before his death, McLeod gave copies of his "list of questionables" to three trusted friends as future proof that "not everyone in this national capital was asleep." The list was shown to a few congressmen last week for the first time.

According to the New York Journal-American, which broke the story, the list "includes the names of pro-Reds, pinks, homosexuals, alcoholics, sex degenerates and a score of well-behaved and well-disciplined individuals suspected of being professional Communist agents."

And all these are in only one agency—the State Department. Goieniewski says they are in every agency except the FBI—and definitely including the CIA, here and abroad.

With such a sickening web as this, it is easy to understand how such vital charges as those made by Chambers and the former KGB agent are stifled before they reach those who would act.

It's time to clean out the pigpen.